



**SOUTH CAROLINA
BUSINESS
ONE STOP**



SCBOS User Survey Report Summer 2008



SC Business One Stop
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INTRODUCTION

A. Background and Objectives

The South Carolina Business One Stop (SCBOS) Web site is a collaboration of several state and federal agencies and private entities designed to simplify the historically complicated and time-consuming tasks necessary to open a business. The site allows for an electronic “one-stop shop” for South Carolina businesses to register and obtain permits and licensing. In addition to starting a new business, SCBOS allows existing business to renew their licenses and pay taxes electronically. In addition to registration, licensing, and renewals (LPRs), the SCBOS site serves as a primary source/point of information and resources for entrepreneurs who are seeking guidance in opening a business in South Carolina. SCBOS’s overall marketing objective is to increase awareness and usage of SCBOS.

The SCBOS User Survey was implemented to assess current users’ level of satisfaction with the service and to define the key benefits of SCBOS that keep driving users back to the web site. The first steps toward being customer driven is to listen to the voice of the customer by: first identifying the customers who are, or should be, served by SCBOS, and then determine the kind and quality of services they want and their level of satisfaction with existing services.

B. Methodology

The sampling frame for the survey consisted of 20,553 email addresses of people who had actively registered or used the web site between the dates of October 2006 to June 2008. A web-based survey [see the Appendix for a hard copy of the questionnaire] was sent to all email addresses on the list in three waves between June 30, 2008 and July 1, 2008. The response rate across the three waves was 3.4 percent which is within the range of commercially acceptable response rates for web-based surveys. Dr. Thomas J. Madden, Professor of Marketing at the Moore School of Business at the University of South Carolina, assisted the SCBOS team in the development of the survey, and he prepared the basis of the analysis presented herein.

MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

1. Key Findings

A significant finding for future marketing efforts is the majority of SCBOS users found the site through a web-based search or were referred by another state agency. The survey results indicate that current and past users are very satisfied with SCBOS. Satisfaction ratings and willingness to recommend SCBOS are outstanding. Once introduced to SCBOS, users tend to use it again especially for accessing information and forms. Prime sources of dissatisfaction for users of SCBOS are a lack of documentation and the site is not seen by many to be user friendly and difficult to navigate.

2. Conclusions

SCBOS facilitates and enhances the interaction between citizens and state government. The site provides access to government on a 24/7 basis which allows the citizens to conduct business with state agencies on their time. The use of electronic technology saves the citizens time and money. The reduction in paper and travel is providing a sustainable solution for interaction with South Carolina state agencies. In general users of SCBOS are very satisfied. There are basic web site navigation and help issues that need to be addressed. Satisfaction and usage can be increased by providing greater access to forms and information.

3. Marketing Implications

Given the high levels of satisfaction and repeat usage of current SCBOS users, marketing strategies need to center on creating awareness of SCBOS. The positioning of SCBOS should promote the theme of a convenient alternative to interact with a variety of state agencies at the citizen's discretion.

However, any conclusions drawn from the survey must be tempered by the fact that only past users of the site were asked to respond to the survey. If at present, approximately one third of filings are completed using SCBOS, a survey of the approximately two-thirds of non SCBOS users needs to be conducted to determine the reasons for nonuse. Specifically the question that needs to be addressed is whether nonusers are simply not aware of SCBOS and how it may help them, are there barriers to using SCBOS, or does SCBOS just not provide a viable alternative for certain citizens to interact with state agencies. Do business transactions in the state require personally talking to someone, or possibly, do the transactions in South Carolina state agencies not yield themselves to an online implementation?

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The following sections summarize the survey findings. The raw data for this survey is saved in a .xls file and can be found on the “**About SCBOS**” web page located on www.scbos.com. (specifically <http://www.scbos.com/About/About+SCBOS.htm>)

1. Location of Users

There were 26 states and 2 countries represented in the Survey. The majority of SCBOS users (84.1%) reside in the state of South Carolina. Residents of North Carolina account for 4.1 percent of SCBOS usage while Georgia residents account for 2.9 percent. Within South Carolina, residents of Charleston, Greenville, Lexington, Richland and Spartanburg account for over 40 percent of SCBOS usage.

Respondents were from the following states:

South Carolina	84.1%	(499/593)
North Carolina	4.05%	(24/593)
Georgia	2.9%	(17/593)
Virginia	0.67%	(4/593)
FL, MD, PA, TX, TN each were	0.51%	(3/593)

SC Counties most Represented:

Charleston	11.6%
Greenville	10.6%
Spartanburg	8.6%
Richland	6.6%
Lexington	6.2%
York	5.2%
Anderson	5.0%
Beaufort	4.4%
Dorchester	2.6%

2. SCBOS Awareness

When respondents were asked “how did you hear about SCBOS,” over 50% of the users were introduced to SCBOS through some type of web-based search. Other state agencies accounted for 19.1% of the awareness of SCBOS.

How Did You First Learn About SCBOS

Web-based, Search	51.0%
Another State Agency	19.1%

Business Colleague	9.5%
Accountant	5.3%
Other	15.1%

3. SCBOS Use

The majority of respondents [85%] use SCBOS for their own business. Of the 15 percent of people using SCBOS for clients of their business, the predominant occupation is an accounting type function (accountant/bookkeeper/CPA).

When you use SCBOS do you use it for your own business or a client of your business?

My Business	85%
Clients of my business:	15%

4. Predominant uses of SCBOS

More than 80 percent of respondents have used SCBOS to obtain a license, permit or renewal. Eighty-one percent of people have used SCBOS to start a new business and 58% have used SCBOS for an existing business. SCBOS is a good source of information and forms. A significant percentage of first time users return to SCBOS to obtain more information or get additional forms. Eighty-eight percent of the respondents used SCBOS to get information with 63% using the SCBOS site more than once to obtain information. Seventy-three percent of respondents used SCBOS to obtain a form with 46% using the site more than once to obtain forms.

SCBOS Usage:

<u>Type of Use</u>	<u>Total Usage</u>	<u>Using Once</u>	<u>Using 2+</u>
License/Permit/Renewal	82.3	50.2	32.1
Start Business	81.1	52.9	28.2
Existing Business	58.1	38.7	19.4
Get Introduction	87.5	24.6	62.9
Get Forms	73.3	27.3	46.0

5. Customer Satisfaction

When respondents were asked whether they would use SCBOS again, 97.3% of the respondents indicated that they would use the site again, and 94.1% said they would recommend SCBOS to a friend or colleague.

SCBOS User Satisfaction:

	Yes	No
Would you use SCBOS again	97.3%	2.7%
Would you Recommend SCBOS	94.1%	5.9%

This remarkably high level of satisfaction is evident in the responses as to whether the SCBOS site makes it easier to work with government agencies. As shown below, the majority of responses indicate that SCBOS makes it easier to renew licenses and permits, find information and get forms or access necessary links.

Has SCBOS Made Working with Government Easier To

	Yes	Sometimes	No
Start a business	81.5%	12.8%	5.1%
Obtain License/Permit/Renewal	78.3%	13.8%	7.9%
Get Forms/Links I need	77.8%	19.7%	2.4%
Find Information Easy	52.7%	36.8%	10.5%

Less than 2% of respondents stated that SCBOS was not useful for paying online with a printable receipt, completing the process of filing and printing a license, and having SCBOS keep a history of transactions.

Percentage of Respondents Stating

	Very Useful	Useful	Not Applicable
Using SCBOS for paying online with receipt	92.5	1.1	6.4
Using SCBOS for completing license process	91.5	1.6	6.9
SCBOS keeping a history of my transactions	91.2	0.5	8.3

In an attempt to understand latent sources of customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction, respondents were asked in an open-ended question format what they liked about SCBOS, what they disliked about SCBOS, and if they could change SCBOS what would they recommend? Responses to the open-ended questions were content analyzed and used to form clusters of response reflecting respondents' beliefs.

A. What do you like about SCBOS?

The content analysis of the verbatim responses for what users liked indicated three underlying categories summarizing 95% of responses. Respondents stated they could save time using the site in lieu of traditional procedures. Similarly, respondents stated that they liked being able to access the site 24/7 and therefore could save on paper, postage and travel. Lastly, respondents like the integration and centralization of state agencies eliminating the need to run around to multiple agencies. The categories and examples of responses for what users liked about SCBOS are provided below.

1. Time saving - easy to use - convenient and accessibility [47%]

"As a small business owner, I like the flexibility and convenience SCBOS affords me, especially for filing my Sales Tax. I usually do my business paperwork well after normal 9-5 hours, and I can do the work and get the information I need any time."

"SCBOS makes starting a business in South Carolina much easier!!! Starting a business for the first time is very cumbersome and SCBOS has made the whole process much less intimidating. I have discussed SCBOS with many other business owners, and they feel exactly the same way. It is a great idea, South Carolina has absolutely succeeded with this approach."

2. Online 24/7 access – there when I want to use it [27%]

"I was able to obtain my sales license immediately, at my convenience without having to call. Any one or fill out a number of forms."

"I can access it any day and any time I have. This is most critical as time is my most valued resource at this time in my business."

"One stop, including paying taxes and fees"

3. Integration of state agencies, centralized – no running around. [21%]

"The integrated system between the different agency of state."

"The idea that one can access all needed agencies for reporting numbers such as withholding, SCESC, etc. when starting a business."

"It provided license information for all of our facilities that I didn't know was available prior to filing on the new system."

B. What do you dislike about SCBOS?

When asked what they disliked about SCBOS the modal response, 31%, was nothing. The greatest source of dissatisfaction was that the site lacked documentation, it was difficult to navigate, and in general, not user friendly. The categories and examples of responses for what users disliked about SCBOS are provided below.

1. Nothing [31%]

“I have not found anything that I disliked about SCBOS.”

“Nothing. Truly one of the best thing's I have seen from S.C. government!
Worked great.”

2. Lack of documentation, poor directions, lack of support [28%]

“too many options-which are very confusing.”

“Sometimes, the forms are difficult to locate.”

“Sometimes info is hard to find or instructions are not totally clear”

3. Difficult to navigate, not user friendly, overall design is not good [27%]

“Too many links to go through to get to the information I need.!”

“Had a hard time negotiating the pages properly”

“Could be friendlier to the first time business owner”

4. Inability to view multiple businesses and past transactions [7%]

“I dislike the fact that in certain cases you must go from starting new business to existing business to get some of the registrations taken care of.”

“Not being able to remove an application or correct it once it is submitted in case I find an error.”

“Not always able to return back to a page I was working on without getting out and going back in.”

C. If you could add one thing to SCBOS, what would it be?

To seek avenues for improvement, respondents were asked: If you could add one thing to SCBOS, what would it be? The responses to this question were very similar to the dislikes and basically reflected how the respondents would fix what they disliked.

Similar to responses for dislikes of SCBOS, 26% of the respondents recommended no changes. The modal response for change was expanded links for forms and information. Other suggested changes included being more user friendly (13%), better instructions/additional help (11%), and having the ability to instant messaging and chat rooms (7%). The categories and examples of responses for recommendations to improve SCBOS are provided below.

1. Expanded links, more information and additional forms [34%]

“Perhaps adding online help where you have tips and techniques provided on certain fields or areas of the site when the cursor is dragged over the item. I didn't need any online help and the only other thing I can think of would have been a "ramification" to the selection of one type of a business over another. Some of this content is already there. Again, nice site!”

“Ability to inquire into all my government business records and view them in a more consolidated manner. Also, I have many business locations in SC and a Google type map showing their locations, tax jurisdiction, and associated tax rates would be informative.”

“It would be nice to find out more information regarding payment schedules for Sales Tax. I understand that there are different schedules, i.e. monthly, quarterly, etc. I would still like to find out if there are any stipulations/criteria for being able to pay quarterly as during some months it costs as much to mail the letter as the check I was righting.”

“Have it calculate the sales tax discount for me. Right now, it asks for that amount before I know the total. A good system wouldn't involve advance planning, then typing into the computer.”

2. Nothing, site met my needs [26%]

“The site is very useful and valuable just the way it is”

“Not sure...haven't used it enough to suggest something really constructive. If I have done the survey, I would prefer not to have to make an answer at the end of making payments (just a pet peeve!) THANKS for having the service. It has really helped out business pay/file for our clients.”

“Your site is excellent. Problems usually arise due to the enormity of the State Government system. Trying to decipher the right road (link) to go down isn't easy and is time consuming.”

3. Make it more user friendly and easier to navigate [13%]

“Get a user friendly programmer in there who also knows all the ins and outs of starting/registering a business and make that a little easier! In the next set of questions, you ask how "useful" SCBOS is, and I think it could be very useful were it more user friendly.”

“There are glitches here and there throughout the site that make it impossible to go from one task to another without starting completely over. Those need to be taken care of.”

“A better, friendlier user interface with clearer instructions and no requirement to keep retyping the same information in over and over.”

“Navigation Bar - where you can click on an item to edit and not have to go back through the whole thing.”

4. Better instructions and additional help sections [11%]

“More advice, legal definitions, common mistakes to look for. Also information related to differences between sole proprietor, LLC, and corporations.”

“A checklist that says ... you're starting a new business - sole prior. - here are the things you must do and here are the direct links to those pages”

“Clearer, step by step instructions for new business owners to walk them through the process from start to finish for the very first time. It's confusing to know where to start and what forms to fill out and if you've done everything.”

5. Instant messaging, live chats, help desk staffed during business hours [7%]

“I believe that immediate online help, where you could speak via instant message to someone at SCBOS would be nice. Beginning, registering, or licensing a new or existing business can sometimes be confusing, and though the website is fairly self-explanatory, online help would be good.”

“A telephone "hotline" or real-time online help. Often, my unanswered questions were very simple, or needed a quick clarification. That "quick" response was not often possible.”

“Better help support/answers (not necessarily tech support) when info is not clear. Better communication between staff and what is available online. Because of my business's schedule, it's much easier to handle communication via web and email, but not all agencies are "friendly" for these types of communications. If I use email, I expect an answer sooner than 5-10 business days. Overall, the website is very helpful.”

“A live chat section for a person to help if you have trouble.”

Appendix A – User Survey

The survey was prepared and implemented on surveymonkey.com.

SCBOS User Survey

SCBOS Survey on Use

We want your ideas and your comments. YOU are our users and we need to hear from you.

1. How did you first learn about SCBOS?

☐ From a business colleague

☐ From an attorney

☐ From an accountant

☐ From a librarian

☐ Brochure describing the program

☐ Found using a search engine (e.g. Google, Yahoo)

☐ Recommended by a state agency

☐ Other (please specify)

2. How many times have you used SCBOS in the past three years for the following:

	0	1	2-3	4-6	7+
Start a new business	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sign up an existing business	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Get a license, permit, or registration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Get a form	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Get information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. What is your opinion of how much SCBOS made working with the government easier? Please respond to the following statements:

	Yes	Sometimes	No	Not Applicable
SCBOS made it easier to start my business	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SCBOS made it easier to renew a license, permit, or registration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SCBOS has the forms or links to forms I need	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can find information easily on SCBOS.com	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. These statements tell us how useful you think SCBOS is.

	Yes	Sometimes	No	Not Applicable
I will use SCBOS again	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I will recommend someone to use SCBOS	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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SCBOS User Survey

SCBOS Survey Likes, Dislikes

SCBOS is working with our South Carolina government partner agencies such as:

- Consumer Affairs
- Secretary of State
- Employment Security Commission
- Department of Revenue
- Department of Health and Environmental Control
- Clemson University Department of Plant Industry
- Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation

Our goal is to make SCBOS.com a central web site to assist you with your business, to help you find the right agency, to provide online filings where possible, and to provide forms for you to download. We also provide FAQ's, a help desk, and email support when you need information.

5. What do you like about SCBOS?

6. What do you dislike about SCBOS?

7. If you could add one thing to SCBOS, what would it be?

8. Help us understand what level of importance you place on these benefits?

	Very Useful	Not Useful	Down't Matter	Don't Understand
Being able to pay online immediately and get a receipt	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Getting the filing complete and printing out the license.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Having a South Carolina government sponsored web site for business needs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Having SCBOS.com keep a history of my transactions that I can look at or print out later.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
What other benefits of SCBOS.com are extremely useful to you?	<input type="text"/>			

SCBOS User Survey

SCBOS Survey User Description

These next few questions will let us group users similar to you.

9. Please enter your zip code or country name.

Zip Code

Country

10. Do you use SCBOS for your business or for clients of your business?

☐ My business

☐ Clients of my business

SCBOS User Survey

SCBOS Survey Continue or Exit

11. What is your primary occupation?

- ☐ Accountant
- ☐ Attorney
- ☐ Bookkeeper
- ☐ Business Owner
- ☐ CPA
- ☐ Paralegal
- ☐ Other (please specify)

THANK YOU for you responses so far. You can **STOP** or **KEEP GOING**.

If you want to **KEEP GOING** - We'd like your opinion on some ideas and features we are considering for SCBOS.



12. IF you want to **STOP**, then **THANK YOU** for your helping us. What do you want to do?

- ☐ KEEP GOING
- ☐ No Thanks, I'll stop now

SCBOS User Survey

SCBOS Survey Page Continue or Exit

THANK YOU for you responses so far. You can STOP or KEEP GOING.

If you want to KEEP GOING - We'd like your opinion on some ideas and features we are considering for SCBOS.



13. IF you want to STOP, then THANK YOU for your helping us. What do you want to do?

- ☐ KEEP GOING
- ☐ No Thanks, I'll stop now

SCBOS User Survey

SCBOS Survey on Features, Ideas

And now for some new ideas we are thinking about over here at SCBOS.com.

What is your opinion?

14. If SCBOS.com was renamed SCBOS.gov to more accurately reflect that we are part of South Carolina state government, would that give you a greater sense of trust or security when making payments or reviewing your business' information?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Don't Care
☐ Don't Understand

15. Would you like to be reminded in advance, by email, if a license renewal is coming due for your business(es)?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Your ideas on this?

16. When going online with the state, you may be prompted for a different user id and password for each site you access. Also, you may have to enter the same information at each South Carolina agency site you go to. We have a goal to reduce the amount of duplication and the amount of effort on your part and on the agency side. How would you answer these statements?

	Yes	No	Don't Care	Don't Understand
I would like to change my phone number (or similar information) for me or for my business just once at SCBOS.com and have it tell the other state agencies or organizations.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I'd like one login id (user id) that is valid when I login to different South Carolina state agencies or organizations when I conduct business with the State.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I prefer having different logins for each state agency and organization.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

17. SCBOS and our state, federal and local partners have training and workshops that are geared to inform and teach businesses about working with us. Would you like SCBOS to tell you when we or our partners are having a training class?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

SCBOS User Survey

18. If yes, which would you prefer - email or automated phone call.

- ☐ email
- ☐ automated phone call

SCBOS User Survey

Exit Survey

That's it! Thank you for taking the SCBOS User Survey!